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IN MEMORIAM.

ULYSSES S. GRANT.

REMARKS

OF

HON. MARRIOTT BROSIUS,

OF PENNSYLVANIA,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

SATURDAY, MAY 19, 1900.

WASHINGTON.

1900.



REMARKS
OF
HON. MARRIOTT BROSIUS.

The House having under consideration the following resolutions:

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring): That the thanks of Congress be given to the Grand Army of the Republic for the statue of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant.

Resolved, That the statue be accepted and placed in the Capitol, and that a copy of these resolutions, signed by the presiding officers of the House of Representatives and the Senate, be forwarded to the chairman of the committee of the Grand Army of the Republic on the Grant Memorial.

Mr. BROSIUS said:

Mr. SPEAKER: The ceremony of this day affords an occasion for a review of the character and career of Ulysses S. Grant. It may be that the time has not come for history to seal the verdict which shall irrevocably fix his place in the ranks of fame. Yet the judgment of mankind on a general view of the totality of his character and achievements, within the limitations which the time and the sphere of his action impose, distinctly mark him as the colossal figure in the historic web of war's wonderful weaving.

As constant as the Northern Star,
Of whose true life and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament.

As you dwell with me for a brief space upon the characteristics and forces with which this marvellous man reared the fabric of his greatness, your patience will be rewarded by the consolatory and instructive reflection that gratitude to public benefactors is the common sentiment of mankind, that the fame of noble men is at once the most enduring and most valuable public possession, and that the contemplation of the heroic dead exerts a salutary and ennobling influence upon the living. It was such an influence that led a young Greek, two thousand years ago, while walking over the fields upon which a Grecian warrior won his victories, to exclaim "The trophies of Miltiades will not let me sleep." So with the contemplation of the great career of our dead hero may come an incantation that will conjure spirits of high principle and exalted patriotism round about us until, like Hector's son,

we catch heroic fire from the splendid courage, sublime devotion, and lofty genius of our illustrious soldier. [Applause.]

General Grant presents from every possible point of view an extraordinary career and a singularly unique character. In some of his attributes, and not a few of the characteristic exhibitions of his rare powers, he is without a parallel in American history. His acknowledged preeminence in no sense arose, nor was it in any degree promoted, by the conditions of his life. Neither birth, nor rank, nor fortune aided his advancement. Allowing for the national exigency which presented a field for the exercise of his powers, his achievements were due entirely to principles, qualities, and forces which summed up a remarkable personality, and in some respects the most imposing and colossal character of modern times. [Applause.]

He possessed an imperious will, sound judgment, stupendous endurance, and a courage that never quailed. In deportment he was thoughtful, quiet and unobtrusive, a stranger to ostentation or egotism, simple in his tastes, elevated in sentiment, and benevolent in feeling. He thought with alertness, observed with clearness, executed with promptness, and never left off until he was done. He was fertile in expedients, rich in resources, and under every extremity of circumstance held all his best powers in perfect command. He was ready to obey and willing to command, content to execute the orders of others or give them himself, as his duty required, and his elevated soul never knew the taint of jealousy or envy.

He was firm and resolute of purpose and a signal example of the highest fidelity to conviction, devotion to duty, and loyalty to conscience and country. As Cicero said of Cesar, he was generous to his friends, forbearing with his enemies, without evil in himself, and reluctant to believe evil in others. Prosperity never made him arrogant; elevation never turned his head or made him forget the obligations of duty, the claims of friendship, or the restraints of moral principle. He maintained a high standard of personal character, possessed a vigorous moral sense, and an integrity of heart that kept him a stranger to moral delinquency through the severe strain of adverse circumstances with which a hard fate in his declining years tried the superb metal of his manhood.

With such an assemblage of qualities inhering in the man he grew like an oak, self-developed, into the extraordinary combination of working forces which he was able to employ with such signal advantage to his country on the most extended and elevated theater of action that ever called out the might and courage of man or witnessed the splendid achievements of his heroism.

There were in his character two forces which made his greatness possible. One was a sublime and lofty self-trust. He leaned upon no man's arm. He walked erect in every path of exertion he was called to pursue. When in command he assumed the responsibility which accompanied duty and advanced with firm and stately step: his march centered on his great soul's consciousness of rectitude, power, and leadership. The other principle which had a large agency in molding his life was that there is no royal road to eminence; that the best thing a man can do under any circumstances is his duty. If Schiller's poetic soul had put to him the question, "What shall I do to gain eternal life?" his kindred spirit would have answered back in the poet's own glowing words:

Thy duty ever
Discharge aright the simple duties with
Which each day is rife. Yea, with thy might.

He dedicated his powers with rare singleness and devout self-consecration to the work before him. The obligation imposed by each day's duty was to him a "thus saith the Lord;" and his faith in the result was half the battle. Sherman once said to him: "Your belief in victory I can compare to nothing but the faith of a Christian in his Saviour."

Prior to the war there was nothing in Grant's career that arrested public attention. He had found no field for the exercise of those amazing aptitudes for war which he so promptly dedicated to his country's service when the national struggle summoned the genius and patriotism of America to that ultimate arena whereon the "wager of battle," by the most unexampled heroism and endurance and the most stupendous efforts of martial genius witnessed in modern times, was to solve the problem of our destiny.

At an age when Alexander Hamilton had laid the corner stone of the most splendid financial system the world ever saw and reached the summit of his fame; an age when Garfield had filled

the chair of a college president, worn the glittering stars of a major-general, and occupied a seat in the National Congress: and an age at which Napoleon had vanquished the combined armies of a continent and was master of Europe, Grant was unknown. He had not even discovered himself; was living in safe obscurity, one of forty millions under the curse of Adam, earning his bread by the sweat of his brow. But within the four corners of his being God had lodged endowments of the rarest kind, forces which needed but the open air of opportunity and the solar energy of a majestic cause to hurry them on to bloom and fruitage.

He was not a soldier from taste. His education at West Point was accepted rather than sought. His appointment to the Military Academy was an accident. When Lincoln issued his call for 75,000 men, Grant responded. A public meeting was held in his town, over which he presided. By prompting and with a stammering tongue he was able to state the object of the meeting. This was his first great day. It made possible his future career of usefulness and glory. He tendered his services to his country through the Adjutant-General of the Army. The letter was never answered, not even filed, and after the war was rescued from the rubbish of the War Department. Later, however, he was commissioned colonel of the Twenty-first Illinois Regiment. In a short time, through the recommendation of the Illinois delegation in Congress, he was commissioned a brigadier-general. His career now commenced. Said one of his eulogists: "He had gained a place to stand, and from it he moved the world." [Applause.]

The war opened to him the gates of his opportunity. It did not make him, but it enabled him to make himself. It was the fire-proof that tested the metal of the man.

In the reproof of chance
Lies the true proof of men. The sea being smooth,
How many shallow lantle boats dare sail
Upon her patient I reast, making their way
With those of nobler bulk.
But let the ruffian Boreas once engage
The gentle Thetas, and anon behold
The strong ribbed bark through liquid mountains cut.
Where then's the saucy boat
Whose weak, untimbered sides but even now
Co-ri-valed greatness? Either to harbor fled
Or made a toast for Neptune.

How well this high philosophy was exemplified during the war has passed into history. One by one the brightest stars in our military galaxy, our worshiped chieftains, succeeded each other in the demonstration of their incapacity for the command of so immense an army on so extended a field, until the tanner of Galena received his commission, accompanied by the benediction of our great war President, and rose at once to the supreme height and filled every condition of the most stupendous undertaking that ever challenged the exertions of martial genius.

We value a chain by the measure of its strength at the weakest point; but we value a man, it has been wisely said, by the measure of his strength at the place where he is strongest. Grant's strongest points were those which qualified him for a military commander.

On the field of war, as the leader of armies and fighter of battles, he won his chief distinction and reached the summit of his splendid fame.

To explain how men succeed, to analyze the amazing exploits of genius and lay bare to the mind's eye the elements which combine to make them possible, is a difficult task and one not suited to this occasion. But no observer of Grant's career could have failed to note some of the more obvious qualities which fitted him for successful war. They were displayed with brilliant effect and startling emphasis in that succession of incomparable achievements from Belmont to Appomattox. True, the former and practically his first battle was lost; but Caesar lost Gergovia, and it is said of him that the manner in which he retrieved his failure showed his greatness more than the most brilliant of his victories.

So the success of Grant in covering his retreat and protecting his army at Belmont showed a high degree of dexterity and skill in the management of men, a remarkable celerity of movement, coolness, and perfect self-command under circumstances calculated in the highest degree to produce confusion and dismay. M. Thiers, in his *History of the French Revolution*, suggests as the crucial test of a great captain "the power to command a great mass of men amid the lightning shock of battle with the clearness and precision with which the philosopher works in his study."

It is said that in every decisive battle there is a moment of cri-

sis, on which the fortunes of the day turn. The commander who seizes and holds that ridge of destiny wins the victory. This requires a swift and sure-footed faculty of observation, capable of covering the possibilities of a situation, discovering the key point of a battlefield and the weak point of the enemy's position with the sweep of the eye, as by a lightning flash. The possession of these high capabilities in a most conspicuous degree gave Grant a preeminence all his own.

The day of the battle of Belmont may be called Grant's second great day, for his qualities as a commander were subjected to the first severe test. That battle was first won and then lost: lost by losing the discipline of the army. The genius of the commander alone saved it from dispersion or capture. General Grant was the last man to leave the field, and he escaped, I have somewhere read, by running his horse from the bank of the river to the boat across a single gangway plank.

Early in the spring of 1862 Grant reached the conclusion that the effective line of operations was up the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, on which were situated Forts Henry and Donelson. In less than twenty days after he had obtained Halleck's assent to the projected movement these two forts had surrendered to this intrepid commander, together with 15,000 prisoners of war. This has well been called Grant's third great day. It established him in the confidence of the people and confirmed his title to the distinction of being a great soldier.

His letter to General Buckner, in answer to a proposition for an armistice, someone has said reads like the letter of Cromwell to the parsons of Edinburgh, and is one of the most remarkable epistles in the military literature of the world.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY IN THE FIELD,
CAMP NEAR FORT DONELSON,

February 16, 1862.

SIR: Yours of this date, proposing armistice and appointment of commissioners to settle terms of capitulation, is just received. No terms except an immediate and unconditional surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant.

U. S. GRANT, *Brigadier-General.*

Gen. S. B. BUCKNER, *Confederate Army.*

From that day forward he commanded the respect, admiration, and affection of every loyal citizen of the Republic. Yet, curiously enough, General Halleck suspended him on the 4th of March

following. In nine days he was restored to his command. These nine days were sad and tearful to the chieftain, who felt the wrong like a scorpion's sting, but no word of complaint ever escaped his lips. [Applause.]

The plan of operations which led to the capture of Vicksburg was conceived by Grant and executed with great celerity and splendid success. The small space of thirty-three days witnessed a notable succession of brilliant movements, when the forces of the enemy within a circuit of 50 miles numbered 60,000 men: the capture of Port Gibson, the victories of Raymond, of Jackson, of Champion Hill, and Black River Bridge, culminating in the investment of Vicksburg, whose capitulation later on closed the memorable campaign and covered with glory the sagacious chieftain whose martial genius achieved the splendid triumph.

After the fatal battle of Chickamauga the Confederate authorities, notably Jefferson Davis, who had visited the seat of war early in October, expected the surrender of our army in a few days. But on the 24th of October General Grant arrived. An offensive movement was at once inaugurated and the battle of Missionary Ridge fought and won, with a trophy of 6,000 Confederate prisoners, 40 pieces of artillery, and 7,000 stand of arms. The Army of the Cumberland was saved, the siege of Chattanooga was raised, and Chickamauga avenged.

Grant then succeeded to the command of all the armies of the Union, numbering a million men, a larger army it is believed than was ever before commanded by one man. The field of its operations was commensurate with its number—from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic, thence south to the Gulf of Mexico, and west to Texas, one army cutting the Confederacy in two and another laying siege to its capital city, all by the direction of this matchless warrior without as much as a council of war. Such consummate strategy, such masterful leadership could lead to but one result. Richmond fell, Lee's army surrendered and the Union was saved. [Applause.]

These stupendous achievements and surpassingly splendid strategic movements which led to the glory of Appomattox all furnish to the curious in such matters the most striking and convincing exhibitions of an exceptionally high order of martial genius.

What place will ultimately be assigned General Grant in the

military constellation of history the judgment of the future must determine. For his contemporaries to place him in the company of Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon is fulsome adulation in which I have no disposition to indulge. To elevate any modern hero to a share in the glories of the battlefield with these phenomenal characters would be as unsuitable, Dr. Lord would say, as to divide the laurels of Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare with the poets of recent times.

Excluding these, however, from the comparison, the well-guarded judgment of dispassionate men will not rank our illustrious leader below the most successful and conspicuous masters of the art of war the world has ever seen. His fame can lose none of its lustre by comparison with Wellington, Marlborough, Gustavus Adolphus, Frederick the Great, Maurice of Nassau, or Henry of Navarre. A just analysis of the aptitudes of these men for war will show more points in which Grant excels than falls below them, and there can be no doubt that when history shall make its final assignment of rank he will stand either in their company or above them.

As a civil administrator he will hold eminent rank among the wisest and best; but the fame of the statesman will ever be eclipsed by the glory of the soldier. His eight years of administration were vexed and harassed by problems of greater difficulty and magnitude than had ever before been encountered by any Government in times of peace. The reconstruction of the Southern States presented questions with which no statesman had ever grappled. When he became President the situation of the United States was engaging the attention of the civilized world. Seven only of the eleven States lately in rebellion had been readmitted to the Union.

The previous Administration had been enfeebled and embittered by an unseemly controversy between the executive and legislative branches of the Government. The progress of reconstruction had been retarded, business interests were languishing, and the public credit was impaired. Foreign complications with Spain and Great Britain also confronted us, so that it may be said that Grant encountered at the beginning of his Administration difficulties of a very grave and threatening character. The power of generaliz-

ing and forecasting is one of the first qualities of statesmanship. Grant possessed this power.

In his first inaugural he outlined with great clearness the questions that would come up for settlement during his Administration and implored his countrymen to deal with them without prejudice, hate, or sectional pride. On the financial question he had a clear judgment and a fixed purpose. He insisted that national honor required every dollar of Government indebtedness to be paid in gold unless otherwise stipulated in the contract. "Let it be understood," said he, "that no repudiator of one farthing of our public debt will be trusted in public place." This was a prophecy. It became a triumph. He adhered steadfastly to the policy he had announced, and at the close of his Administration one-fifth part of the public debt had been paid and the public credit reestablished.

His foreign policy was equally wise and statesmanlike. "I would deal with nations," said he, "as equitable law requires individuals to deal with each other." He served notice on ambassadors, kings, and emperors in these words:

If others depart from this rule in their dealings with us, we may be compelled to follow their precedent.

At the close of his Administration there were no international questions unadjusted.

On the vexed question of suffrage he was wise and farseeing. In his inaugural he emphasized the urgency with which the ratification of the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution appealed to the best judgment of the nation as the only just and practicable settlement of the question of suffrage. He had an invincible conviction that the amendment embodied the fundamental idea of republican government and American liberty.

The experiment of popular government had not been completed before the war, but now every citizen was a member of the ruling as well as the subject class. The transition from the old régime to the new was sudden and great. With the overthrow of the Confederacy went the downfall of slavery and the extreme doctrine of State rights. With the triumph of the Union came the political equality of men in the States and of States in the Union. There was now a true national sovereignty and a true national

citizenship. Every man was a sovereign, whether qualified for his kingdom or not. The nation welcomed the new ideas, and went promptly to work to create new institutions suited to them.

Concerning the principles which were to fashion the new fabric Grant had well-defined convictions and statesmanlike views. The problems to be solved were intricate and difficult, calculated, many of them, to appall the stoutest hearts and baffle the wisest heads, and yet at all points at which the Executive came in contact with these perplexing problems, which he helped to lift up until they comprehended in their scope the equality of citizenship and the elevation of a race, he treated them with a fullness and completeness of consideration, breadth of comprehension and rectitude of judgment, and disposed of them with such preeminent wisdom as to fairly establish his title to rank with the more eminent of American statesmen.

In one aspect of his character Grant had probably but one rival to share his laurels in the history of human greatness. He was a consummate master of a sublime and imposing silence. And this was a valuable auxiliary to the soldier, though it would have disqualified him for the Senate, where, it is said, the first duty of man is to speak. He accomplished more with less waste of vocal energy than any other man since William the Silent: but when he did speak, his utterances were notable, as potent as his silences. His words were cannon shots, half battles. They carried consternation with them like dazzling bolts from the darkened heavens.

They were ponderous, falling on his foes
As fell the Norse god's hammer blows.

Some of his laconic expressions and terse dispatches will outlive the most brilliant of Caesar's and the most crushing of Napoleon's. Men will be fighting out their battles "on this line if it takes all summer;" will be "moving immediately upon the enemy's works," and "demanding unconditional surrender" to the end of time. [Applause.]

The stars that glittered on General Grant's brow, like those that deck the heavens, were not all of the same magnitude. They differed in glory and had rank among themselves. There is one attribute of his character which removes him from the ranks of the illustrious leaders and statesmen in whose company he will

in most respects go down to posterity and secures him a pre-eminence enjoyed by no other warrior in human history; a point of character at which the soldier and the statesman meet; an excellence which adorns the one and qualifies the other—a matchless magnanimity.

From no point of view does the greatness of his character shine with more supernal splendor. The ancient Romans dedicated temples to the highest human excellences. Our great soldier-statesman bowed before the temple which enshrined the divine attribute of magnanimity. *Ultimus Romanorum* was written upon the tomb of Cato and, if among the epitaphs which shall perpetuate the glories of General Grant there should be no expression of this transcendent perfection, the silent marble would break into speech to declare to posterity that in this phase of his character, at least, he was the noblest Roman of them all. [Applause.]

Grant and Appomattox are the two halves of one of the most interesting and impressive situations which history records. They constitute an historical unity that can never be severed. They are held in the enduring embrace of a happy conjunction of place and event which made the former the theater and the latter the star performer of one of the grandest dramas in the tide of time. That they are so linked in perpetual association in the public mind finds some denotement in the ease with which Senator Conkling took captive a national convention with the crude but clever rhyme:

And when asked what State he hails from
Our sole reply shall be:
"He hails from Appomattox
And its famous apple tree."

From Appomattox he sent on wings of lightning to the Secretary of War the message which carried joy to more hearts than any previous one in human history:

APRIL 9, 1865—1:30 p. m.

Hon. E. M. STANTON:

General Lee has surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia this afternoon on terms proposed by myself.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut. and Gen. U. S. A.*

When this magnanimous chieftain laid his conquering sword on the capital of the Confederacy, received Lee's surrender and

the curtain fell before the tragedy of the rebellion, he said to the vanquished armies: "Lay down your arms and go to your homes on your parole of honor, and take your horses with you to cultivate your farms, but come and take dinner with us before you go." Were ever before the vanquished thus treated by the victors? At the fall of Toulon a French warrior wrote: "We have only one way of celebrating victory: this evening we shoot 213 rebels." How resplendent by contrast appears the conqueror of the rebellion!

Who in the fear of God didst bear
The sword of power, a nation's trust!
"Let us have peace!" said the soldier
Who grasped the sword for peace
And smote to save.

From the hearts of patriots everywhere attuned to the same melody is lifted up the glad refrain; celestial choirs prolong the joyful chorus until the spirit of our statesman-warrior sends back the swelling anthem, "Let us have peace."

As I contemplate the last of earth of this rounded and completed character, passing from the sight of men in that beautiful park by the river side, a vision bursts upon my imagination, and I see the open grave over whose portals rests the casket waiting its descent into the darkness of the tomb; on either side stand with bowed heads the great chieftains who led the opposing armies in our civil war, the conquerors and the conquered, paying equal tributes of honor to the savior of the Union, and between them I see the great spirit of our dead, resplendent in the glory of immortality, reaching down his spirit hands and clasping those of the reconciled warriors, and I hear his celestial voice saying:

Americans, children of a common country, brethren in the bonds of patriotism, joint heirs of a heritage of glory, peace, blessed peace, be and abide with you evermore!

If a firmer and more indissoluble Union, a better understanding and more cordial relations between the sections, and a permanent and abiding peace, founded upon true respect for each other and veneration and affection for our common country, should be the fruition of his great example; if his surviving countrymen will but emulate his high character wherein it is most worthy, avoiding the faults which saved him from perfection, and will rededicate themselves with his singleness of purpose and self-consecration

to the maintenance of his lofty standard of personal character and exalted patriotism, and thus, through the elevation of the citizen, secure throughout the Union he loved and saved the supremacy of virtue, honor, patriotism, and public reason, then the victory of his death will outshine the splendor of the greatest of his life; and as was said of the strong man of the olden days, so it may be said of our mighty and strong, that "The dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life." And though the affection and veneration of his admiring countrymen have commemorated him in costliest marble and splendid mausoleum and elaborate epitaphs have summed up his virtues and will transmit to future generations the records of his imperishable renown, the fittest, noblest, most permanent, and abiding monument to this distinguished citizen, eminent statesman, and illustrious soldier will be his country's peace. [Loud applause.]

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